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SUBJECT: GERMANY: MOVING FORWARD WITH EU OBSERVER MISSION
IN GEORGIA

REF: BERLIN 01261

Classified By: Deputy Political Minister-Counselor Stanley Otto for reasons: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Germany plans to have 18 of the 40 observers it has pledged for the EU observer mission on the ground in Georgia early next week, with the additional 22 on standby should the EU need them. Contacts at MFA and the German Government Center for International Peace Operations (Zentrum fuer Internationale Friedenseinsatze -- ZIF) are confident that the EU observer mission will be ready by October 1 despite the painful bureaucratic process involved in the deployment. The newly appointed head of the EU observer mission, German Ambassador Hansjoerg Haber, is flying to Tbilisi September 19 to prepare for the mission. END SUMMARY

THE GERMAN CONTINGENT OF THE MISSION

¶2. (C) MFA EU Desk Officer Elizabeth Dietl informed POLOFF that an EU meeting in Brussels late September 18 will determine how many observers each EU member state should send. Although Germany publicly has pledged 40 observers, Dietl and ZIF Head of Recruitment Jens Behrendt indicated that Germany may send significantly fewer than that, at least initially, because of the desire by almost every EU member state to participate in this mission (reftel). While France will remain the largest contributor, it may send only around 50 rather than 70 or 80 suggested earlier, said Behrendt. According to Dietl, if every participant in the mission were to send the pledged contingent, the EU would far exceed 200 observers. Behrendt said that as of September 18, 10 German police officers and eight civilians were scheduled for deployment, with the remaining 10 police officers and 12 civilians on standby.

¶3. (C) Regardless of how many are deployed to Georgia next week, Dietl said that all 40 of those selected would begin two days of training in Bonn on September 19. The initial group of 18 then will fly to Tbilisi on September 22 or 23, and MFA will provide enough armored vehicles to ensure that every German observer has a "safe way to move around," according to Dietl. Although the EU observer mission does not officially begin until October 1, Dietl expected that observers arriving earlier would start their duties in Tbilisi, and Behrendt indicated that more pre-deployment training will be offered. Behrendt expected the entire German contingent to be unarmed and responsible for the area on the coast and around Abkhazia. None are scheduled to serve in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia.

¶4. (C) Behrendt said that the 20 German civilian observers selected for this mission range in age from their early 30s to mid-60s and have varied backgrounds. Several speak Russian and some have a military background. ZIF informed the 20 of their selection late September 17. The civilian observers will sign individual contracts directly with the head of the EU observer mission, rather than with the EU per

se. The initial contracts will be for six to twelve months of service, although Behrendt expects most observers to extend their contracts and stay longer. Germany already has chartered an Ukrainian Antonov to transport the observers and their equipment to Tbilisi as early as September 22, according to Behrendt.

¶5. (C) Dietl said Ambassador Haber was selected by the EU Political and Security Committee as the head of the EU observer mission based on a recommendation from EU High Rep Solana from a pool of three candidates. Haber is flying to Tbilisi in the afternoon September 19 to take up his duties, according to Dietl.

PAINFUL LESSON FOR THE EU

¶6. (C) Behrendt shared that the entire process of readying the EU mission has been a "painful birth," with much confusion as to what was required and who was responsible for specific tasks. Behrendt contrasted the EU process with that of the UN: rather than having one responsible office as in the UN, the EU has several institutions and bodies, sometimes with overlapping responsibilities, making contradictory simultaneous decisions. Although Behrendt expected the EU mission to be fully deployed by October 1, he opined that the difficulties reveal a structural problem in the EU with regard to planning and implementing overseas observer missions. He thought the EU observer mission eventually would be opened to participation by non-EU states, as is the case in other EU civilian overseas missions, like EULEX in Kosovo.
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